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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL MARR NATO IZ IT
SUBJECT: ITALY SUPPORTS EXPANDED NTM-I; CONSIDERING
ASSISTANCE TO IRAQI NAVY

REF: STATE 73794

Classified By: A/Pol M/C Gabriel Escobar for reasons 1.4 b and d

(C) FM Frattini told the Ambassador July 21 that Italy would try to do more at NTM-I, in particular with the Iraqi Navy (septel on full discussion to follow). Frattini said he planned to discuss the issue during Iraqi PM Maliki's July 24 visit. Poloff also delivered reftel points encouraging Italy to provide additional resources to support an expanded NTM-I to NATO Acting Office Director Piermario D'Acco on July 10. D'Acco was well aware of the decision to expand NTM-I and said Italy had strongly supported the motion. D'Acco said Italy would carefully consider the request to provide additional resources to support the newly expanded mission, but cautioned that Italy was already doing more than its fare share. He noted that this was a particularly difficult budget year for Italy and that doing more in Iraq would mean doing less in Lebanon, Kosovo, or Afghanistan. He concluded by saying it would be unlikely to see any large increase in the already substantial Italian involvement in NTM-I in the near future but assured poloff that NATO's request would be seriously considered.

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